**Florida Becomes a Territory**

In the early 1800’s the United States stretched form the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. Many Americans wanted to move into lands west of the Mississippi River that was claimed by several other Nations. Some believed that it was a natural fate for these lands to be acquired for he United States. This right to take over territories from other nations was the Manifest Destiny or natural outcome of Americans desire to move into these lands.



The leaders of America used a variety of methods to acquire territory for the United States. Sometimes they bought territory or made agreements with the leaders of other countries. One time territory was added after a war. Most of the land we know today as Florida was at one time under Spanish rule but Americans living in the Southeast wanted the United States to take over Florida. Slaves in Georgia would run away to Florida settlements or hide with the Seminoles, a tribe of Native Americans in Florida. The Seminoles and runaway slaves often attacked the Georgia landowners and then fled back into Florida. To end these Seminole raids, General Andrew Jackson and his army came to Florida in 1817.



Seminoles from Florida and run away Slaves attacking a settlement in Georgia.

Andrew Jackson not only put an end to the Seminole raids but also went on to capture two Spanish forts including the one at Pensacola, which was the capital of Spanish Florida. They realized that they could not keep the United States from talking over the Florida territory so in 1819 Spain agreed to sell Florida to the United States. The Adams-Onis Treaty was approved by Spain and the United States in 1821.

Andrew Jackson served as the military governor of the newly acquired territory of Florida. After Florida became a territory of the United States, big changes followed. A new capital was built in Tallahassee and new farms were started. Within 10 years many white Americans moved to Florida. The Seminoles were ordered by the government to move out of Florida to reservations in the west, but many Seminoles refused. The Seminole Indian War was fought against the United States and most of the Seminoles were either killed or forced to leave their homeland and settle in the west. A few fled to the south and hid in the Everglades.